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Atari Online News, Etc.  
A-ONE Online Magazine  
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~ Morton Downey Goes Web ~ People Are Talking! ~ ACE Swap Meet!  
~ New Palm IIIE To Debut ~ Pets Online Is Booming ~ MSN Free??  
~ Mitnick To Clear Name ~ MS Office Vulnerable! ~ New Java Chip?  
~ Atari Banner Exchange ~ Anti-Cybersquatting OK ~ New Look PCs

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-* Hackers Vandalize Security Sites! *-
-* Delphi Forums Attain Million Message Month *-

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->From the Editor's Keyboard
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"Saying it like it is!"

Well, the weather has finally improved, i.e. the heat and humidity has broken to tolerable levels. This past week was wonderful. I'm hoping that the weather holds out through next week while I vacation once again this summer. I was hoping for another two weeks, but circumstances prevented it. I'll just have to wait a few more weeks and take two together, then. <g>

I don't have a lot to say this week; no apparent reason other than to conclude that the summer months are usually relatively quiet. So, while I'm in a mellow mood, I'd better shove off and let you get to the rest of this week's issue!

Until next time...

# Atari Users Banner Exchange

From Rob Mahlert

The Atari Users Network web site is offering the chance to join in their banner exchange program. This program is free and only open to Atari web sites. More info at the URL below.

<http://atari-users.net/banx/>

# Astro Solutions Games

From: Kevin Savetz <savetz@northcoast.com>

The "Astro Solutions Games" for ST-High are ready to be downloaded!

Apoint(45 KB):  
<http://www.muenster.de/~dambergj/Apoint.zip>

Simclone(53 KB):  
<http://www.muenster.de/~sak/SIMCLONE.ZIP>

Axarrow(46 KB):  
<http://www.muenster.de/~sak/AXARROW.ZIP>

Galaxy(46 KB):

<http://www.muenster.de/~sak/GALAXY.ZIP>

Starbreak(32 KB):

<http://www.muenster.de/~dambergj/astar.zip>

Apack(80 KB):

<http://www.muenster.de/~dambergj/Atari.zip>

There are also two Level sets for ESPRIT/1989:

<http://www.muenster.de/~dambergj/LEV1999.ZIP> (10 KB)

<http://www.muenster.de/~sak/LEV19992.ZIP> (10 KB)

#### Video 61 Announces 4 New Carts

From: Kevin Savetz <[savetz@northcoast.com](mailto:savetz@northcoast.com)>

Video 61 has announced four new-to-cartridge format games for the Atari 8-bit:

Arkanoid on a cart - for all XL/XE computers with at least 64k of RAM

The APX classic Getaway! for all XL/XE computers with at last 64k of RAM

Water skiing game for all XL/XE computers with at least 64k of RAM

Dynakill, a Bomberman clone, for all XL/XE computers with at least 64k of RAM

<http://www.atarisales.com>

#### Registration For Shareware Programmers

From: Kevin Savetz <[savetz@northcoast.com](mailto:savetz@northcoast.com)>

This site (in German) offers registration and service packages for shareware programmers. Details are on the site, they support Atari and Amiga software.

<http://members.aol.com/sdleidel/>

#### ICE Progress - TCP/IP For 8-bit

From: Ken Siders <[atari@columbus.rr.com](mailto:atari@columbus.rr.com)>

I have updated my ICE (Internet Connectivity for Atari Eight-bits) page

with a new version of my program. The current version will download and display the source for a web page (currently hardcoded to download my Atari page).

I would appreciate any feedback from anyone capable of testing the program to see if it works at all for anyone else. You can download it from my Project ICE page at <http://home.columbus.rr.com/ksiders/ice.htm>.

Thanks ,

Ken Siders

atari@columbus.rr.com  
http://home.columbus.rr.com/ksiders/atari.htm

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->A-ONE's User Group News      -   Shows, Meetings, News!
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# Atari Swap / Columbus / 1999 / Plans Are Set

From: FMHCOM

Ok, folks, here's the OFFICIAL WORD

The Atari Computer Enthusiasts of Columbus are pleased to announce their next annual swap to be held 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. September 18, 1999, at the Oakland Park Community Center in Columbus, OHIO, USA. Sellers of any type (commercial vendor or private) may obtain tables at \$5 each, and each \$5 table fee will also admit one person (sorry, if no extra person in your party, the table is still \$5 ... after all, folks, we're trying to keep this thing going, ya know). Otherwise, it is a \$3 admission per person.

A .bmp map will be available from [rwarenz@infinet.com](mailto:rwarenz@infinet.com)

The location is the same that we've used for the past couple of years. [and, hint-hint, nudge, wink -- Donald Thomas: do you still have that FANTASTIC map you posted last year??? Could we prevail upon you again?]

PLEASE SPREAD THE WORD. All Atarians of all platforms and interest are invited, and we don't squawk a lot if you bring "other platforms" to swap, either. We might draw the line if you bring some pigs or stocks to sell, but we're a reasonably open bunch otherwise.

PLEASE HELP GET THE WORD OUT. Mailing costs are our prime \$\$ problem/limitation, and we're going to stretch it to the limit this year to try to get everyone possible to drop in. Contact any vendors you know.

Encourage friends and relatives. And whoever it is, encourage them to contact us to let us know they are coming! We'd like to be as prepared as we can be. (Table reservations appreciated).

Best Regards,

Wayne

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING  
compiled by Joe Mirando  
jmirando@portone.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Well, my long awaited vacation is here, and it seems that it's taken almost half of it to get me into "vacation mode".

That's what usually ticks me off about vacations. You end up spending a majority of the time getting yourself ready to enjoy it. By the time you finally get your mind and body ready for it, it's time to start getting yourself into "work mode" again and go back to work.

Nonetheless, I'm enjoying the idea of hanging around the house and tearing apart computers from dawn to dusk (yes, I still wake up at my normal "get ready to go to work" time... which IS dawn) and making them work correctly again. I've got one here that suffered a nervous breakdown. It's taken quite a bit of rehabilitation, but it now at least knows that it's a computer again.

Most of these machines aren't mine. They belong to friends and relatives and have suffered all kinds of abuse throughout the year. Most of them have simple problems... loose cables or chips, bad configuration files, messed up hard drives, that kind of thing. They get dropped off here and usually get picked up the following day, ready to be abused by their owners all over again.

My own machines, of course, are in tip-top shape. The TT and Stacy are humming right along, and the new PC laptop is configured as well as an Intel/Microsoft machine can be.

I will be installing Linux on the laptop as soon as I have the time, and I expect that to make a big difference in its usability. Once I get Linux running on the PC, I hope to get it running on the TT. Since the process for PCs is much more automated than it is for the Motorola 680x0 CPUs, I figured that this makes the most sense.

I've found a great source for Linux stuff, by the way. It's a website called cheapbytes.com, and they offer unbelievable prices on Linux distributions and related software. As a matter of fact, two copies of two different Linux distributions for the PC cost me less than UPS Second Day shipping charges to get them delivered here. The Motorola version is more expensive, but still only about half the cost of buying the Windows '98 Upgrade... and that's shipped!

Linux interests me mainly because it's a free Operating System with support from all over the world. It was also designed to be used on 32 bit systems, which is something that the offerings from Microsoft can't claim... well, they can make the claim, but... <g>

I'll keep you informed of my progress with Linux, both on the PC and on the TT. My only unfulfilled wish is that it would work on all Atari

16/32 bit computers. Unfortunately, it needs at least a 68030 CPU and an FPU, which precludes its use on all STs and MEGAs, and on most Falcons.

On the SETI@home front, Team Atari now has 19 participants and a total of over nine THOUSAND hours of CPU time. If you're interested in joining up to search for signals from an extraterrestrial intelligence, check out the following web site: <http://setiathome.ssl.berkeley.edu>

Well, let's get on with the posts from the UseNet...

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup  
=====

Hugh Lutley asks for help with his new Falcon:

"I've just got my first falcon yesterday and it did come with a manual. My question is this; where is the desk accessories/control panel? I am lead to believe by the manual that it is under the 'desk' label on the taskbar, but it is nowhere."

Ronald Hall tells Hugh:

"Hi Hugh. Those are Desk Accessories that sit under the "desk" listing in the Menu Bar, and the X-Control panel is one of them. They all have a \*.ACC extension and reside on your C:\ drives root partition. X-Control, in turn controls CPX's (Control Panel Extensions). Did your Falcon come with a MultiTos floppy disk, or one called Language? If so, you can find X-Control on them. If not, you can grab them from just about any good ftp site that carries Atari software..."

PS Hmm...tell us more about your Falcon! Does it have a hard disk drive? Memory? Etc, etc,...it will help us to help you better..."

Nicholas Bales adds:

"The taskbar is W95 term, I suppose you're talking about the desktop menu. You are looking in the right place.

The control panel is an .acc program (Desk Accessory), therefore it isn't in ROM. If you are booting from an empty floppy, you won't have it. To run ACCs, you have to put them in the root directory of your boot drive (A or C), and they will load on bootup. You can only have 6 accessories at one single time.

The latest control panel from Atari is Xcontrol.acc, and you can get it from the Quick FAQ."

Aurølien MESSE asks for help locating a language disk:

"I am trying to find the ATARI STE Language Disk for a friend. I don't know if it is useful, but the serial number is CA400607-004RV.B."

Ian Braby tells Aurølien:

"The STe language disk contains only the following:

BASIC interpreter  
CONTROL.ACC

EMULATOR.ACC  
EXAMPLE.PRG

and is, therefore, not really worth having! However, I'll ZIP it up, if you're interested, and send it to you!"

Hugh Lutley posts this about MagiC on his Falcon:

"I'm just setting up my new Falcon but I have encountered a major problem. I prefer to use MagiC 5.11 as an operating system but after I partition my Quantum xp 4.2 gig drive to about 7 'divided' partitions with HD Driver 6, MagiC will hang up trying to access any other partition than C.

I have re-installed and no matter how minimal the installation (nothing but HD drive then MagiC) I'm still getting the same problem.

Anybody got a clue on this one?"

Kevin Dermott tells Hugh:

"I seem to remember something similar until I upgraded my HD Driver, have you tried the demo of a later version, tried a previous or even AHDI at least this would isolate the problem."

Hugh asks:

"Where would I find a demo version?"

Kevin replies:

"[http://acp5.chemie.uni-kl.de/seimet/index\\_english.html](http://acp5.chemie.uni-kl.de/seimet/index_english.html)

this may not give you the full answer as it will not partition your drive, I think there were some bugs in HD Driver 6 which I assume you did your partitioning with, but it is worth a try."

Bengy Collins, curator of MagiC Online, adds:

"You can get the latest demo in the Demo section of the download bay in MagiC Online (<http://bengy.atari.org>). You can also get it from the author's page and the new ASH pages."

Hugh adds:

"I like the look of MagiC so this is annoying. What's wrong with me! I've been using PC's since the advent of the Pentium 90. I've got a 233mmx, a 400 celeron and the P90 running Linux. But I've just gone and bought a Falcon.....

I've got the strangest urge to go and buy a IMac now and get MagiCMac up and running...

I've sorted out the problem. Using HD Driver 6 I changed the Compatibility to 'TOS, Minimal Sector Size' as opposed to the default option of 'TOS, Standard.

Thanks anyway, at least I know where to find your page now."

\*\* Author's note: For anyone running any flavor of MagiC, Bengy's

Page is THE place to check for cool new things to run and all the latest information about what's going on with MagiC.

"SHAcoustic" posts:

"Help! I recently went to turn my hard drive system for my 1040STe on and, although I heard all the usual sounds from the power supply and the clickety-clack of the hard drive spinning, I could not get the hard drive icon to come up on the screen no matter what I did (including running the ICD software to try to force it to appear). The hard drive is a Miniscribe 8053 with an ICD SCSI Controller card and host adapter card. How can I possibly troubleshoot which component is not working, or find a place that can do it for me?"

Jim DeClercq tells Steve about one of those "alternative" repair methods:

"Well, if it is the hard drive, try turning it upside down, however that is done on your system. If it works that way, back it up promptly. If it did not work that way, the problem is electronic. It has worked for me."

Dr. Clu posts:

"Well, I was hanging about in my OTHER orphaned platform newsgroup, the Newton MessagePad, and found an interesting article about a new java port that was done to the Palm Pilot in C.

Being that's the case, I thought I'd share this with the rest of the ST world and those trying to port over java to the ST.

@>-->-----

Subject: KVM: Possibly Java for the Newton  
Date: 17 Jun 1999 20:04:33 GMT  
From: Sean Luke <seanl@scruffy.cs.umd.edu>  
Organization: U of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742  
Newsgroups: comp.sys.newton.misc, comp.sys.newton.programmer

See <http://java.sun.com/products/kvm/wp/>

Further, at the Java One conference today, Sun committed to porting the KVM and its Java2 Micro Edition code to the Palm Pilot. This is a very controversial move on Sun's part, as it seems to be leaving some of the Sun licensees in the dust.

According to the white paper, the KVM is written entirely in clean C with relatively few system calls (and \*possibly\* no threading requirements), which would likely make porting to the Newton feasible. It needs "128K of available memory", though later the page says it's designed to work in "tens of K of heap". The engine and Micro Edition library has no AWT, in fact, no graphics calls of any kind. It's very stripped down, relying on the native GUI of the device (quite a departure from Sun's run-everywhere philosophy previously). This is accomplished through native function calls, which should make setting up an API to call NewtonScript calls pretty simple.

The big question is if/when Sun is going to release the code. If they never release it as open source, this may be just a pleasant exercise."



Sega is banking on Dreamcast's faster, more realistic graphics to regain its lost share of the video game market, which is now dominated by Sony

Corp.'s Playstation. Nintendo Co. Ltd.'s Nintendo 64 is number two.

Sega has mounted a \$100 million marketing blitz, which kicked off with an ad campaign on MTV. More surprises are to come, Stolar said, but declined to be more specific. Sega, which launched Dreamcast in Japan last year, will sell it in the U.S. for \$199.

Sega also has a pact with video rental chain Hollywood Entertainment Corp., which started renting the Dreamcast console on July 15 ahead of the product launch.

"The rental program has been really successful," Stolar said, adding that they were seeing about 15,000 rentals a week. "This has never been done before in the video game industry."

#### Sega Seen Tapping AT&T WorldNet As ISP For Dreamcast

Sega of America is expected to announce Wednesday it has chosen AT&T WorldNet as the Internet service provider for its Sega Dreamcast Network, a source close to the company said Tuesday.

The announcement by Sega President and Chief Executive Officer Bernard Stolar at a teleconference will be the first time Sega has talked on the record about its Internet strategy for the Dreamcast console, set to go on sale on Sept. 9. Industry analysts were given a private briefing Tuesday.

Monday, the San Francisco-based company, the U.S. unit of Japan's Sega Enterprises Ltd., said it had pre-sold more than 200,000 Sega Dreamcast units. Its goal is to sell 1.5 million by March 2000.

The first leg of a \$100 million advertising campaign broke in July, and next Monday Sega will announce the launch of its Mobile Assault tour, in which two 18-wheel tractor-trailer rigs will haul Dreamcast consoles across the country for a championship competition powered by online game site IGN.com.

For the non-gaming community, Dreamcast's internal 56 kilobit modem should be the big news. Sega claims that the 128-bit console with a 200 megahertz CPU will be four times faster than Intel's Pentium II chip for processing three-dimensional graphics, and that the same processing power will be available for viewing Web content on the Internet.

Planetweb, Inc., of Mountain View, Calif., is developing a special browser for Dreamcast based on Microsoft Corp.'s Windows CE.

At a suggested retail price of \$199, many industry observers say the Dreamcast could be the killer Internet appliance for a mainstream audience.

In Japan, where the Dreamcast has been available for several months, the Internet service is free and an external hard drive will be available.

Despite intense interest in so-called "information appliances" -- low-cost, easy-to-use tools for accessing e-mail and Web content -- Sega has been reticent to discuss its Internet strategy. Its reticence has been attributed to the company not wanting to alienate what it sees as its core audience, the hard-core gamer.

Sega will begin marketing to the mainstream as the holiday season approaches, according to Peter Moore, Sega senior vice president of marketing.

''Success will be obtained by getting to the mass consumer sooner rather than later," he said.

However, Moore took a cautious stance toward Sega's core market of gaming enthusiasts. ''If we did our marketing around Kmart, sure, we could sell millions of them but the longevity would be limited," he said. ''Our belief is that the hard-core gamer is still the key to the platform."

#### Hasbro Interactive Gives the Green Flag to Its First Title for Nintendo Game Boy Color

Hasbro Interactive has started their Nintendo Game Boy Color engines with the first stock car racing game available for Nintendo's new handheld system. The new title, NASCAR Challenge, is Hasbro Interactive's first release to take advantage of its partnership with NASCAR.

''Teaming quality gameplay with the hot NASCAR license is a winning combination for Nintendo's fast-growing Game Boy Color gaming platform," said Tom Dusenberry, President of Hasbro Interactive. ''Hasbro Interactive will continue to bring the finest in interactive entertainment to Nintendo Game Boy Color as the platform grows and reaches an ever wider audience."

NASCAR Challenge will give players the feel of racing bumper-to-bumper with other drivers in the fastest growing spectator sport in America. The game places the player into a series of pre-defined scenarios, including a specific goal that must be accomplished: ...You are 190 laps into the race. Just 10 laps left to go. You are pulling out of the pits with a full tank of gas, 4 fresh tires, and 9 other cars in front of you. Your goal: finish in the top 3. Go!... Upon successful completion of a challenge, more features are unlocked and the player is presented with other challenges.

Some of the features of NASCAR Challenge are:

- \* Six different tracks
- \* Challenges are structured such that they increase in difficulty, but more important they teach the player the skills necessary to conquer the next challenge
- \* Open/traditional racing on tracks once they are unlocked by completing challenges (user will be able to determine/set race length)
- \* AI opponents will dynamically catch-up/slow-down to always keep the user in the middle of the racing action and give them a chance to win
- \* User selectable in-car or third-person views
- \* Simple to drive physics model
- \* Game Boy Color Rumble Packfi support
- \* Head-to-head racing with 2 GBC units connected together

NASCAR Challenge for Nintendo Game Boy Color will be available in the fourth quarter of 1999 at an approximate retail price of \$29.95. Majesco Sales, Inc. will have exclusive distribution rights for the title.

## H2O Entertainment Corp's The New Tetris for the Nintendo 64 launches in North America

H2O Entertainment Corp. is very pleased to announce that The New Tetris video game for the Nintendo 64 is now available in North America. The video game is published and distributed by Nintendo of America Inc through its distribution network of over 15,000 retailers including Toys R Us, and Wal-Mart.

"H2O is very proud to have developed The New Tetris for the Nintendo 64 and carry the legacy of one of the greatest games of all time to the next millennium," states Michael Tam, President of H2O.

## 3dfx Unveils New 3-D Graphics Technology

PC graphics chip and board maker 3dfx Interactive Inc. announced on Monday details of a new graphics technology that will smooth out the flaws in today's 3-D images.

"We want to close the gap between digital Hollywood effects and the PC," said Scott Sellers, co-founder and chief technology officer of the San Jose, Calif. company.

Known as the T-buffer, the new hardware technology allows effects such as anti-aliasing (for smoothing the jagged look of 3-D images), motion blurring (emulating the effect of movement too fast for the "camera") and depth of field blur (foreground appears in focus while background does not).

"We are all about doing the Myst-like special effects in real time," said Sellers. The technology will find its way into a product coming out this fall, said the technology exec.

Perhaps the most useful part of the technology is its ability to fix "aliasing" -- a side effect of fixed-resolution monitors that causes steps to appear along straight lines.

Anti-aliasing has always been a Holy Grail within the graphics industry. In fact, many graphics board makers attempt to smooth out images in software -- slowing a game's action to a crawl.

"The anti-aliasing feature is certainly the most interesting, and immediately the most useful," said Peter Glaskowsky, graphics guru at chip technology watcher MicroDesign Resources Inc. "It does something that we need in 3-D graphics -- that is, smoother anti-aliased lines."

The T-buffer technology combines multiple images -- currently four -- that are kept in memory to generate a smoother final image that appears on the computer screen. The best part: It works automatically with no fixes or patching on the part of the software developer.

Two other applications of the technology -- motion blurring and focal-point blurring -- are less of a slam-dunk for the game industry, said Glaskowsky.

Motion blurring approximates what happens when a camera tries to capture a fast movement, while focal point blurring lets game producers or the player

focus on a particular object or distance.

Unfortunately, the effects that can be generated by the 3dfx card are only rough approximations, and don't always look good, said Glaskowsky. "They don't really mimic the behavior of those effects," he said. "The motion blur creates to me what -- in some of their demos -- was visually objectionable because the object seems to be skittering or skipping across the screen."

By announcing the technology, the company hopes to get consumers and developers interested in the potential of the new effects.

"(Graphics are) getting more and more complicated every year," said Sellers. "This announcement is a way to educate the consumers." He added that company officials explained the technology in meetings with game developers at the Game Developers Conference in March.

Despite the questions regarding the usefulness of the other applications of T-buffering, its ability to remove jagged lines from an image will be what sells cards with the new technology.

And MDR's Glaskowsky believes creative software developers will find innovative uses for the T-buffering hardware. "I think there is also a really good chance that application developers will figure out other ways to use the T-buffer that 3dfx hasn't even thought about yet and produce other kinds of special effects that will be very useful," he said. "And that, I think, is perhaps its biggest potential."

#### Cyberbabe Lara Croft Joins Software Police

Cyberspace pin-up Lara Croft threw her virtual weight behind a new anti-piracy advertising campaign Thursday to highlight widespread criminal involvement in Britain's computer software market.

The European Leisure Software Publishers Association (ELSPA) said that 80 percent of raids carried out by its U.K. crime unit on computer game pirates uncovered evidence of other criminal activity, including drugs, prostitution, pornography and terrorism.

Croft, the gun-toting sex symbol who stars in Tomb Raider, Britain's most successful computer games series developed by software group Eidos Plc, will appear in a poster and press campaign with the slogan "'Don't Play Games With Criminals... It Will All End In Tears."

Roger Bennett, director general of ELSPA, said the campaign aimed to raise awareness that cheap copies of favorite games were not being distributed by "'Robin Hood" characters.

"'It is clear to us that criminals are moving into computer games piracy as an easy means of funding other illegal activities and laundering cash," he said.

ELSPA estimated that the British computer games industry loses three billion pounds annually through piracy and the black market for pirate games cost 525 million pounds in lost taxes in 1998.

Between 60 and 70 percent of consumer software bought in Europe originates

in Britain, ELSPA said.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online      -      Online Users Growl & Purr!
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# Atari Video Club Announcements

From: DANA VC

Orders are now being taken for the Jagfest issue of the Atari Zone fanzine  
(Color or Black/White)

The Color issue is \$8.00  
The Black/White issue is \$2.00.

Details on how to order is at the club's website.

AVC online = <http://avconline.atari.org>

CGE Press Release from Songbird

CRYSTAL MINES AUTHOR TO APPEAR AT CGE, SONGBIRD GIVEWAYS

August 2, 1999

For immediate release:

ROCHESTER, MN -- Songbird Productions is working overtime to get everything prepared for Classic Gaming Expo (CGE), which will be held in Las Vegas, Nevada, on August 14-15. CGE is the premiere event in 1999 for fans of classic gaming systems such as Atari, Intellivision, Vectrex, and more.

Carl Forhan, owner of Songbird Productions, is pleased to announce that Ken Beckett will be attending CGE, and will be present at the Songbird booth at various times throughout the show. Ken Beckett is the author of Crystal Mines (NES) and Crystal Mines II (Atari Lynx), and is assisting in the development of the upcoming Crystal Mines II: Buried Treasure expansion, slated for unveiling at CGE.

Crystal Mines II: Buried Treasure takes advantage of a hidden feature in the existing Lynx Crystal Mines II cartridge -- the cartridge supports downloads of new levels into Lynx RAM via the comlynx port. The product will include Windows software on a CD-R and a special Lynx-to-PC serial cable which also doubles as a developer cable for those who may own a BLL or SIMIS cartridge for the Lynx.

Be sure to stop by the Songbird booth to meet Carl and Ken, and while

you're there, enter your name in the drawing for a number of prizes, including a variety of 2600/7800/Lynx games and hardware.

To keep up to date with the latest news at Songbird Productions, be sure to visit the company web site at <http://songbird.atari.org>, or send an email to [songbird@atari.org](mailto:songbird@atari.org).

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PRESS RELEASE

## 1999 Classic Gaming Expo Documentary

THE OFFICIAL CLASSIC GAMING EXPO VIDEOTAPE DOCUMENTARY BEGINS TAKING ORDERS!

August 4, 1999

LOS ANGELES - Terminator Line Entertainment is deep into preproduction on the official documentary for the upcoming Classic Gaming Expo (CGE), which is set to be held in Las Vegas, Nevada, on August 14-15. The CGE show is a celebration of the early years of classic gaming including systems from such developers as Atari, Apple, Intellivision, Vectrex, and more.

The video, which is set to run at approximately two hours, will cover all aspects of the show including highlights from all the Keynote Speakers - which include Steve Cartwright and David Crane (of Activision), Christian Svensson (of MCV), Donald A. Thomas, Jr. (formerly of Atari Corp now with VM Labs), Don Daglow and William C. Fisher (Blue Sky Rangers), Michael Cartabiano and Patrick King (of Vectrex), and many many more! Also covered in the video will be all the booths, show-goers, the Museum of Classic Gaming systems, contests, and direct feeds of all the new games being premiered at the show.

The video is set to be shot on Mini Digital Video and edited on-line for maximum image quality. It will then be professionally duplicated and mailed out. Current projections suggest that the video will ship the first half of September.

Ordering information is available through the CGE Video website, <http://home.earthlink.net/~santora/cgevideo.html>, or at the show through the Atari Gaming Headquarters Booth.

Mark Santora, head of Terminator Line Entertainment, has been an active member of the gaming and video community for the last twenty years. His previous video work includes the highly praised World of Atari 1998 Documentary, the Next Gen Debuts videos from E3, AEO at E3, and several independent projects.

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A-ONE's Headline News  
The Latest in Computer Technology News  
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Delphi Forums Sets New Record with Million Message Month

Delphi Dominates Community Creation Market with One Million Messages  
Posted in July and 10 Million Total Messages

CAMBRIDGE, Mass.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Aug. 2, 1999--Communities Built for Fox, About.com, Xoom.com, MechWarrior3, ClassMates.com and Dictionary.com Drive Unprecedented Growth

Delphi Forums, the Web's leading community creation services company, today announced that more than one million messages were posted during the month of July, and more than ten million messages have been posted since launching last year. Because message boards are a core component of online communities, message volume is the key indicator that Delphi tracks for community vitality.

Also during the month of July, average pageviews per session increased from 18 to 20. These milestones demonstrate Delphi's unmatched ability to build truly interactive communities for its partners, which include Fox News, Fox Sports, About.com, Xoom.com, Microprose MechWarrior3fi, ClassMates.com and Dictionary.com and more than 80,000 active forum leaders.

"Today's announcement is further proof that no one understands how to help companies build online communities better than Delphi," said Dan Bruns, president and CEO of Delphi Forums. "This tremendous growth in message volume, pageviews per visit, time spent online, and registered participants make Delphi's platform the biggest and most active community creation service in the world."

Delphi delivers rich web-based communities by combining a powerful forum development environment and technology with complete integration, technical and promotional support. Delphi is a site-multiplier(TM) for partners who want to build quality interactive communities using market-proven technology and expertise. Because all activity takes place in moderated forums, participants don't have to contend with "spam" postings common on other message services such as Usenet. And unlike chat sites, most activity in Delphi's forums takes place in personalized message boards so anyone can participate or view discussions at any time. Delphi's services are available through free options for individuals, and special programs for Brand Affiliates and Enterprise Partners.

Delphi Forums is the Web's leading community creation service and the interactive ingredient in many popular destination sites. Delphi provides its partners, from large Internet sites to individual forum leaders, a unique environment in which to create, manage, and grow their online groups. Delphi's feature-rich, web-based discussion platform, sophisticated forum management tools and comprehensive support appeal to Web companies wishing to build communities quickly, inexpensively, and with no internal



development. With more than 80,000 active forums and two million registered participants, Delphi's Forums constitute the largest collection of self-managed communities on the Web. Among Delphi's partners include: Xoom.com, Fox News and Fox Sports, About.com, InfoSpace.com, Advance Internet, PlanetAll (a subsidiary of Amazon.com), and Classmates.com.

#### Microsoft May Offer Free Web Access

Microsoft Corp., intensifying its battle with America Online Inc., is considering offering cheap or free Internet access to boost its flagging MSN online service, industry analysts said Thursday.

Rob Bennett, marketing director for Microsoft's consumer and commerce group, said no announcement is imminent but confirmed the company is "looking at a lot of different pricing models" to jump-start MSN.

Word of Microsoft's plans came just two weeks after the company launched an assault on AOL's hugely successful instant-messaging service that executives on both sides call a "sideshow" to the main battle between the computer industry titans.

"It's pretty much the cyberspace version of the Cold War," said Jae Kim, an analyst at Paul Kagan Associates in Carmel, Calif. "Each company is going out and trying to extend its sphere of influence."

Microsoft has shifted course often since it took direct aim at America Online four years ago with its launch of MSN, then known as the Microsoft Network.

While the service quickly established itself as one of the top Internet access providers, Microsoft had to scrap its original proprietary model and has been struggling to catch up with the rise of the Internet ever since.

AOL went on to become the undisputed market leader with nearly 20 million subscribers, including its secondary CompuServe unit, compared with an estimated 1.7 million for MSN, which no longer discloses its subscriber base.

"Microsoft is not used to being left in the dust," said Gary Arlen, president of Arlen Communications, a Bethesda, Md., research group. "There are some very big egos at stake, but more importantly Microsoft wants to drive traffic to its transactional business, which is where its heart really is."

Microsoft executives told industry analysts last month the Redmond, Wash.-based software giant intends to stay in the access business for just that reason.

"We're totally committed to getting as many people online as possible, and access is a key way to do that," Bennett told Reuters. "There are more ways you can differentiate yourselves than just pricing, although certainly that is one way that is resonating with people."

Stock in AOL and other Internet access providers fell Thursday after a report on Microsoft's plans in the Wall Street Journal.

AOL hit a session low of \$77 before coming back to close at \$83.50 on the

New York Stock Exchange, down \$3.94. Prodigy Communications Corp. (Nasdaq:PRGY - news) fell \$1.25 to \$17 and EarthLink Network Inc. fell \$3.31 to \$37.06, while Microsoft gained 81 cents to close at \$85.75, all on Nasdaq.

"It's going to threaten profit margins, especially at America Online, and that has investors worried," said Peter Coolidge, senior equity trader at Brean Murray & Co. "It's hard to compete against free."

AOL generated \$3.3 billion in revenues from monthly subscriber fees in its latest fiscal year, or nearly 70 percent of its total \$4.8 billion.

But AOL already competes against free Internet access providers like NetZero Inc., which began operating its advertising-supported service in October and already has 1.2 million subscribers, according to Interactive Services Report.

Microsoft and AOL also have been heavily promoting cheap or free computers that require a three-year commitment to their Internet access services.

For their part executives of Dulles, Va.-based America Online said they were not concerned about a price war with Microsoft, noting that few customers flinched when they raised the price for AOL's unlimited monthly access last year to \$21.95 a month from \$19.95.

"People aren't making that decision based on price," said Barry Schuler, president of AOL Interactive Services. "Clearly Microsoft has tried and tried but has been unable to deliver a product that strikes a chord with people, so what they're saying is they're going to take the low road with pricing."

#### Anti-Cybersquatting Bill Clears

The Senate Judiciary Committee approved legislation Thursday aimed at limiting so-called cybersquatting by people who register Internet domain names with the purpose of selling them later.

Domain names are the addresses computer users enter to access a particular Web site. They are sandwiched between "www." and ".com," ".net" or ".org."

Some people have found a lucrative practice in registering Web addresses using the trademarks of famous companies in hopes of later forcing the companies to pay sizable amounts of money to buy the rights to the Internet locations.

The legislation to limit the practice was sponsored by a bipartisan group including Judiciary Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch, R-Utah.

Approved by voice vote and sent to the full Senate, the bill would allow trademark owners to recover statutory damages in cases where it is proven that a trademarked name was registered in bad faith by a person who intended to unfairly profit from its sale.

The measure also would allow trademark owners to seek the forfeiture, cancelation or transfer of an infringing domain name after satisfying the court that it has tried but was unable to locate the person who registered

it.

Hatch said many cybersquatters register domain names under aliases or otherwise provide false information, which makes it difficult for corporations and others to locate them.

The bill also would encourage registrars of domain names to work with companies to prevent cybersquatting. But it contains no criminal penalties.

Hatch said the practice harms the public by eroding consumer confidence and hurting businesses by tarnishing the "goodwill value" associated with their names.

Last week, the committee heard numerous tales consumer confusion stemming from the false registration of domain names.

In one case, it learned of a cybersquatter who registered the names "attphonecard.com" and "attcallingcard.com," allegedly to sell calling cards, and solicited personal information, including credit card numbers, Hatch said.

Other examples involved the Dell computer company and automaker Porsche.

The bill is S. 1255.

#### Flawed Software Vulnerable Via Web

Flaws in the Microsoft Office software suite could be used by pranksters or cybercrooks through e-mail or rogue Web sites to retrieve, alter or erase data in computers used by millions of people.

Some newer Compaq and Hewlett-Packard computers that can be upgraded automatically over the Internet also contain flaws that could be similarly exploited, but only over the Web, security experts have found.

Attempts to take advantage of either set of vulnerabilities would not be detected or prevented by antivirus software but there is no evidence that such mischief has occurred, said Russ Cooper of Lindsay, Ontario, in a telephone interview Saturday.

Cooper, who runs a Windows NT security mailing list called NTbugtraq, said Microsoft developers expect to have an Office fix ready as early as Tuesday.

Andrew Dixon, group product manager for Office, did not return a call for comment and other knowledgeable Microsoft officials also were unavailable, company spokesman Dan Leach said.

Jeffrey Schiller, computer security chief at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, said the problems illustrate the pitfalls of upgrading programs over the Web or through e-mail despite the convenience.

"It's not clear to me that it's a wise idea to write all these scripting files ... that let you completely control the computer," Schiller said.

Now that the flaws are known, recreational hackers and criminals may well be scrambling to take advantage of them before the fixes are in place, he

warned.

The vulnerabilities were first reported Saturday in The New York Times.

Viruses typically have spread through macros, small programs combining a series of commands. A computer user opening e-mail or importing material from a Web site with macros typically is alerted and may disable the macros or reject documents and files that contain them.

The new vulnerability is from a different source.

Last week, Juan Carlos Cuartango, a programmer who previously found security gaps in Microsoft's Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator, discovered that Internet Explorer and Windows are configured to "trust" Word, Excel, Powerpoint and other Office program documents. They may be used as Trojan Horses to implant malicious code into a computer, triggering low-level operating system commands that could change or destroy files or even an entire hard drive without resorting to macros.

"This is a bug that needs to be fixed, a bug of huge proportions," Cooper said. "The ramifications are quite large."

Office 2000 and some of the final versions of Office 97 are free from the flaw, but it is present in millions of installed versions of Office 97 and probably also in many older versions, possibly dating as far back as 1992, Cooper said.

Dixon told the Times that Microsoft may offer a mechanism to alert computer users of embedded system commands and data base queries before they are executed.

"We take security issues very seriously," he said. "Right now, we are working on testing a solution and steps for customers to take."

One Compaq flaw was detected in November by Frank Farance of Farance Inc., an information technology consultant, and rediscovered July 23 by Richard Smith, president of Pharlap Software in Cambridge, Mass.

It involves a Java applet, or small program, that allows the quick upgrade of Compaq Presario computer programs over the Internet.

But the applet also can be directed by a Web page to reveal e-mail lists, release financial records or provide addresses, phone listings and credit card numbers.

Smith said he found a similar problem with some Hewlett-Packard computers. Hewlett-Packard officials would not discuss the matter.

A Compaq spokesman said other computer makers have similar problems and suggested there was little chance that a hacker could make malicious use of the applet.

For now, Compaq plans to instruct users on how to disable the utility for now, then will offer an improved applet that is being designed to prevent breaches.

Internet vandals broke into the servers of network security and utilities firm Symantec Corp. Monday morning -- defacing the company's Web site.

While the vandals claimed to have infected Symantec's network with a worm, quaintly dubbed Bloworm, two months ago, the company denied Monday that any worm existed on its systems.

"There is no virus infection, no worm infection, and no danger to customers," said Richard Saunders, a spokesman for the Cupertino, Calif., company.

"They didn't get in beyond posting a mildly offensive, but otherwise impotent, message on our home page."

The five cyber vandals, who identified themselves only by their handles, claimed otherwise. "Our w0rm iz spreading around (Symantec's) netw0rk and infecting (it's) flleez, since about 2 months ago. phear," stated the group in a document of typically spelling-impaired hacker-speak. The document was left behind by the group after they broke into the servers of Symantec at about 5 a.m. PT Monday.

Worms are virus-like programs that infect systems through networks automatically without the need for an unknowing user to open a file or run an application.

Symantec has always been a popular target for Internet vandals looking for a hard nut to crack. The only difference -- this time someone actually got in.

"What this incident does show is that you cannot be complacent towards this kind of threat," said Saunders. The Symantec spokesmen could not detail how the cyber vandals entered the company's network.

Symantec engineers took down the page within an hour of its posting, but not before the media in Europe got wind of the defacement. The BBC posted a story early Monday morning.

#### Hacker Vandalizes Security Site

A hacker used an unusually clever exploit Thursday to vandalize a prominent Internet site devoted to computer security, the online equivalent of a thief burglarizing police headquarters.

The embarrassing electronic assault against the AntiOnline site occurred days after other hackers altered the Web site for Symantec Corp., whose software is used by millions of consumers to protect against viruses and electronic snoops.

In the latest incident, a hacker using an Internet account in Russia successfully tricked the site's computer to load hidden software code from elsewhere onto one of its own Web pages, called "'Eye on the Underground."

Although the hacker never directly infiltrated AntiOnline's own computers, the hidden code redirected visitors to a Web page with the image of an unblinking eye, along with the message "'expensive security systems do not protect from stupidity."

'I wouldn't call it sophisticated, but I'd call it clever," acknowledged John 'JP" Vranesevich, who runs AntiOnline in Beaver, Penn., a popular site specializing in news about hackers and security.

The affected AntiOnline page was designed to automatically collect and display messages posted to an online discussion group at another Internet site popular among hackers.

But someone using the Internet account traced to Russia slipped hidden computer code into the text of one of those messages, which was then automatically loaded onto AntiOnline's site and sabotaged it.

'We were doing filtering," Vranesevich said. 'We realized this wasn't coming from a Catholic academy Web site. There was an error in of our filters."

Vranesevich repaired his site just over an hour later, but this week's attacks raised questions about Internet security: If organizations like AntiOnline and Symantec, which clearly are aware of potential security problems, can't protect their sites, how can the rest of the Internet?

'There is no absolute security," said James Adams, chief executive officer of Infrastructure Defense Inc., which works to protect companies against hackers. 'All you can do is try to keep ahead of the game. For anybody to claim they're totally secure, it's not true."

Adams said Web sites specializing in computer security need to take greater precautions because successful attacks against these computers can carry greater glory among the underground hacking community.

'There are brownie points to be gained," Adams said.

'Do we need better education? Yes," agreed Russ Cooper of NTBugtraq, a popular Internet discussion group about computer security. 'Do we need better tools? Yes. Does that mean I'm never going to suffer an attack? No.

'There isn't a piece of software you double-click to set up and it's secure," Cooper said. 'You have to have staff and policy, and you have to have monitoring."

Vranesevich, who was demonized by some hackers when he announced over the summer that AntiOnline will help authorities trace and prosecute computer attacks, noted that other Web site operators aren't as vulnerable to the same technique that affected his site.

'We sort of caused it ourselves," he said. 'We visit the hacker sites dynamically, and that is the type of scenario your average system administrator probably wouldn't encounter. We're doing things far more obscure."

Mitnick: 'I Was Never A Malicious Person'

Kevin Mitnick and his attorneys are asking a federal judge to unseal a court filing that they claim proves the government was guilty of misconduct while building its case against the hacker. The goal, says Mitnick in a rare interview with ZDNN, is to clear his name.

"At the beginning of this case the federal government manipulated the facts to allege losses that were grossly inflated," Mitnick said in a telephone interview Thursday night from the Los Angeles Metropolitan Detention Center. "Hopefully, if the court considers this motion and rules upon its merits, it will clear me publicly of the allegations that I caused these significant losses."

The motion, filed by defense attorney Don Randolph on July 22, is the latest conflict in a case that's remained unusually acrimonious, considering that both sides reached a plea settlement in March. Under the terms of the agreement, Mitnick pleaded guilty to seven felonies and admitted to penetrating computers at Motorola, Fujitsu and Sun Microsystems, and downloading proprietary source code. On Aug. 9, he's expected to be sentenced to 46 months in prison, on top of the 22 months he received for cell phone cloning and an earlier supervised release violation.

The only sentencing issue left unresolved is the amount of money Mitnick will owe his victims.

Prosecutors are seeking \$1.5 million in restitution -- a modest figure compared to the \$80 million the government sought in an appeals court last year, when it successfully fought to hold the hacker without bail. That figure, though no longer promulgated by prosecutors, vexes Mitnick, who sees a "snowball effect" of bad press that began with a 1994 front-page article in the New York Times.

"Because of this assault that was made upon me by John Markoff of the New York Times, then the federal government grossly exaggerating the losses in the case and the damages I caused, I have a desire to clear my name," Mitnick said. "The truth of the matter is that I was never a malicious person. I admit I was mischievous, but not malicious in any sense."

Markoff reported on Mitnick for the New York Times, and went on to co-author Tsutomu Shimomura's book, "Takedown: The Pursuit and Capture of America's Most Wanted Computer Outlaw -- By The Man Who Did It," slated as an upcoming movie from Miramax. Markoff's portrayal of Mitnick, and the profit it ultimately earned him, has been the subject of some criticism from Mitnick's supporters, and raised eyebrows with a handful of journalists.

Markoff's most enduring Mitnick anecdote is the story that the hacker cracked NORAD in the early 1980s, a claim that was recycled as recently as last May by another New York Times reporter. "I never even attempted to access their computer, let alone break into it," Mitnick said. "Nor did I do a host of allegations that he says I'm guilty of."

For his part, Markoff says of the NORAD story: "I had a source who was a friend of Kevin's who told me that. I was not the first person to report it, nor the only person to report it."

The July 22 motion filed by Mitnick's attorney accuses the government of coaching victim companies on how to artificially inflate their losses. The filing is based on documents Randolph subpoenaed from Sun, which show that shortly after Mitnick's February 1995 arrest, the FBI specifically instructed Sun to calculate its losses as "the value of the source code" Mitnick downloaded, and to keep the figure "realistic."

Following the FBI's advice, Sun estimated \$80 million in losses based on the amount they paid to license the Unix operating system. Six other

companies responded, using software development costs as the primary calculus of loss. The total bill came to \$299,927,389.61, significantly more than the \$1.5 million the government says Mitnick inflicted in repair and monitoring costs, and theft of services and the \$5 million to \$10 million both sides stipulated to for purposes of sentencing.

"At the beginning of this litigation, the government misrepresented to the federal judiciary, the public and the media the losses that occurred in my case," Mitnick said.

To Randolph, it all smacks of collusion. "What comes out from the e-mails that we have, is that the so-called loss figures solicited by the government were research and development costs at best, fantasy at worst," he said. "I would classify it as government manipulation of the evidence."

However, prosecutor David Schindler dismissed Randolph's claims as "silly and preposterous."

"What would be inappropriate is to tell them what dollar amount to arrive at. In terms of the methodology, in terms of what is to be included in loss amounts, that direction is something we often provide because we're aware of what components are allowable under law, and which components are not," he said.

Schindler said development costs are a valid indicator of victim loss, but acknowledges that putting a dollar figure on software can be difficult.

Mitnick and his attorney both say there's more to the story, but they can't talk about it. At Mitnick's last court appearance on July 12, the judge granted a government request that any filings relating to victim loss be sealed from the public.

"As much as the government would like to, you can't take the recipe for ice and file it under seal and have it become confidential," said Mitnick, who, along with his attorney, is challenging the confidentiality of the loss information, and asking for the motion to be unsealed.

Mitnick claims he smells a cover-up. "The government should not be permitted to bury the truth of the case from the public and the media by seeking and obtaining a protective order to essentially force me to enter a code of silence," he said.

"Our only concern, as it has been from day one, is the protection of the victims of Mitnick's crimes," prosecutor Schindler said. "Why Mitnick and his lawyers want to continue to harass, embarrass and abuse them remains a mystery to us, but it's something that we will continue to oppose vigorously."

Although the software costs are no longer being used against his client, Randolph claimed that by "manipulating the loss figures," the government raises the issue of whether even the more modest \$1.5 million calculation is accurate. In the sealed motion, he's seeking an evidentiary hearing to explore the matter, and asking that Mitnick be released on a signature bond pending that hearing.

And if Mitnick winds up owing money anyway? "Were asking for sanctions that the government pay the restitution," Mitnick said, "and that the judge recommend that I be immediately designated to a halfway house for the government's misconduct in this case."



Excerpt of the Sun documents are available on the Free Kevin Web site, maintained by members of a tireless grass-roots movement that's protested the hacker's imprisonment for years. "I'd like to sincerely thank all my friends and supporters for all the support they've given me over this long period of time," Mitnick said. "I'd like to thank them from my heart."

### Microsoft to Hackers: Crack This!

In an attempt to burnish its tarnished reputation for network security, Microsoft issued an open challenge on Tuesday to the hacking community. But potential testers barely got a chance to attempt to break Windows 2000's security system, as the test server Microsoft offered crashed and stayed down for most of the past 24 hours.

Microsoft placed a web server running the latest beta of Windows 2000 and Internet Information Server (IIS) outside its firewalls, and invited the public to go after target files and user accounts it placed there. The company's reason for doing so? "We hope that this kind of open testing will allow us to ship our most secure OS yet," said a Microsoft spokesperson.

The hacking community was and is largely unimpressed, however. In its posted coverage, the Hacker News Network called the challenge "an obvious ploy to get free publicity...It is hoped that this is not a primary testing method."

Members of the Linux-enthusiast site Slashdot for the most part concurred, accusing Microsoft of using anti-Microsoft sentiment for free auditing.

Meanwhile, the Linux community created a counter-challenge of its own. Tuesday afternoon, LinuxPPC, the developers and distributors of a PowerPC-native version of Linux, challenged hackers to crack one of its servers. Unlike Microsoft, which did not offer any kind of incentive or award to hackers, LinuxPPC is giving the machine to the first person to break in.

If it was meant as a publicity stunt, the Microsoft security challenge may have backfired. As soon as the site went online, Microsoft ran into technical difficulties with the test server. Early visitors reported problems with the home-page HTML and Javascript, some serious enough to prevent them accessing the page at all. Posted status logs indicate that the server had to be rebooted at least once because the system log was full, and some services were unavailable at reboot.

Most significantly, the server was offline for most of Tuesday due to what Microsoft described as "router problems". Though intermittently available Wednesday morning, the site was down at press time, and appears to have been pulled from DNS servers entirely; ping tests indicated the MS router was functional. Some Slashdot contributors reported seeing a notice that the site had been withdrawn, but no such notice is currently posted on any publicly accessible MS server.

A Microsoft spokesperson attributed some of the difficulties to thunderstorms in Seattle on Tuesday, but had no comment on the site's status at press time.

## Microsoft Prepares 'Comet' for Orbit

Microsoft Corp. is gearing up to launch a pre-beta suite of networking and security products, code-named Comet.

Encompassing a proxy server, firewall, fax server, interactive voice response (IVR) engine, and other goodies, Comet has not yet been publicly announced. BetaNews.Com webmaster Nate Mook first reported the development Wednesday after anonymous tipsters pointed him to the pre-beta Web site.

"They're going to start inviting beta testers very shortly," says Mook. "I assume people in the Windows 2000 testing program will be the ones invited."

Comet also includes a preview version of Microsoft's H.323 Proxy and H.323 Gatekeeper. These components are designed to offer beefed up communications utilizing NetMeeting 3.0 and other H.323-compliant apps.

According to Comet release notes, the products will be released as a unit for pre-beta testing, but likely will be broken apart for commercial shipping.

Says the document: "...this combination does not represent the configuration of the final products. Actual ship vehicles, product plans and configurations will be announced at a later date."

Also according to the release notes, Comet will initially be released only on Windows 2000 Server RC1 for the x86 platform. The DEC Alpha platform is not supported in the developer beta.

## PC Makers Line Up Behind Intel's New Pentium III, Celeron

Intel Corp. topped off its two PC processor lines with new high-end chips -- the 600MHz Pentium III and the 500MHz Celeron. Computer makers, including IBM, Compaq Computer Corp., Toshiba America Information Systems Inc. and Hewlett-Packard Co., quickly followed suit with new PCs, workstations and servers based on the processors.

Along with its new systems, IBM launched the IBM PC Lifecycle Care program, a support offering designed to help customers determine when to upgrade their PCs. Under the program, IBM will work with customers to designate so-called workhorse models on which they can standardize. Through a customized e-support Web page, participants will be kept up-to-date on technology changes as well as receive previews of upcoming IBM products. The program covers PC 300s, ThinkPads, IntelliStations and Netfinity servers. Pricing for the program was not available.

IBM's new \$1,895 PC 300PL features the 600MHz Pentium III, 128MB of Synchronous Dynamic RAM and up to a 20.4GB hard drive. Its IntelliStation E Pro and the dual-processor-capable M Pro, which include the new Pentium III, 128MB SDRAM, Intel's 440 BX chip set and 2X AGP (Accelerated Graphics Port), and up to an 18.2GB hard drive, sell for \$2,249 and \$2,699, respectively.

Compaq announced the Prosignia Desktop 330, incorporating the new Pentium III, for small-business users. The system, which starts at \$2,129, includes

up to a 37GB hard drive, 384MB of RAM and a 52X TrueX CD-ROM drive. The PC also comes standard with Compaq's Prosignia Internet keyboard and Microsoft Office 2000 Small Business.

The Houston-based company also unveiled a DeskPro EN model using the 600MHz PIII starting at \$2,239. New DeskPro EN models and EP systems incorporating the 500MHz Celeron chip are available starting at \$1,129. A Professional Workstation AP200 and AP400, with single or dual 600MHz Pentium IIIs, start at \$2,671 and \$2,699, respectively.

Toshiba rolled out the 600MHz Pentium III-based Equium 7100 series with up to a 20GB hard drive. Prices for the PC start at \$1,599 including three-year parts and one-year labor limited warranty.

Hewlett-Packard introduced a slew of systems based on the new processors. Three new NetServer servers -- the LPr, LH 3 and E 60 -- each use up to two 600MHz Pentium IIIs. The LPr starts at \$4,230, while the LH 3 starts at \$5,130. Pricing was unavailable for the E 60 models.

HP also launched two new Vectra desktop PCs, a Kayak workstation and two Pavilion desktop PCs. The Vectra Vli8 comes equipped with the 600MHz Pentium III, 64MB of SDRAM, a 13.5GB hard drive, 32X CD-ROM, a Matrox G200 graphics card and Windows NT. Pricing was not available.

The Vectra Vei7 includes the 500MHz Celeron chip, 32MB of SDRAM, 4.3GB hard drive, CD-ROM drive, sound card and Windows 95 for \$899.

The dual-processor-capable Kayak XU PC Workstation, with the 600MHz Pentium III, 128MB of SDRAM, 9.1GB hard drive, Matrox Millenium G400 graphics, 32X CD-ROM drive and Windows NT, is \$3,509.

The 600MHz Pentium III-based Pavilion 8590C and the Pavilion 8560C, with the 500MHz Celeron, are \$2,299 and \$1,099, respectively.

The various vendors' PCs are all shipping now.

The 600MHz Pentium III, with 512KB of Level 2 cache, is available in 1,000-unit quantities for \$669. The 500MHz Celeron, also in units of 1,000, is \$167.

#### New-look PCs Coming This Fall

Say good-bye to the ho-hum boxy beige PC this fall.

At least if Intel Corp. and a handful of PC makers have their way.

Later this month, Intel will preview new designs from top-tier PC makers that will ship starting this fall.

The new-look PCs have been developed under an initiative called Easy PC, which includes Intel, Microsoft and PC makers Gateway, Hewlett-Packard and IBM.

The goal: Make PCs easier to use through software advances and simplified hardware design.

The initiative, launched in September 1998, has already resulted in several

changes on the PC landscape. New hardware design guidelines are eliminating many older technologies. And Microsoft pledges to make computers easier to use with the next-generations of its operating systems. Finally, the initiative will produce new methods of testing ease of use for PCs.

The net result of the effort will be the launch this fall of smaller, sleek PCs, built around guidelines for easier-to-use hardware released by Intel earlier this year. The machines are easy to setup, configure and get online with this fall, according to proponents.

A typical Easy PC will offer a 500MHz to 600MHz Celeron or Pentium III processor with Intel's 810 chip set. The low-cost chip set offers a built-in graphics engine. A version of the 810 chipset, the 810E, is due later in the year for use with Pentium III.

The Easy PC will also shed parallel ports, serial ports and ISA support. No more floppy drive, either. It will come in a variety of designs, including an all-in-one package similar to Apple Computer Inc.'s iMac, said Steve Whalley, Intel's PC initiatives manager, in Chandler, Ariz.

Several of the PC makers involved in the Easy PC initiative will offer an early look at their products at Intel's Developers Forum in Palm Springs at the end this month.

Easy PC will target mostly first-time buyers, especially those who have been scared away on the perception that computers are too difficult to operate.

"Until the PC becomes an unobtrusive part of the furniture in the room, its use is not going to take off," Whalley said. "It's hard to be intimidated by a fish or a rabbit or a different shape."

The new computers will likely be more expensive than a similarly configured "beige box" PC. Over time, however, ease-of-use features will be incorporated into all PCs, reducing prices.

"There are people who are never going to buy a PC. However, there's an audience out there that would benefit from easier to use PCs. But someone has to produce one," said Schelley Olhava, a research analyst for International Data Corp. in Mountain View, Calif.

Olhava credited Apple Computer Inc.'s iMac as the standard for ease of use in a personal computer.

"There is a segment that's attracted to the iMac, because it's easy to use," she said. "You're paying a premium to buy an iMac [about \$1,199] but the ease of use is attractive."

One of the first PCs to go the Easy PC route is sold by Mattel Inc. The company yesterday announced two new PCs for children, the Barbie PC and Hot Wheels PC.

Mattel's products may sound like kids stuff, but they feature Intel's small Flex ATX motherboard -- developed for use in Easy PCs -- and Universal Serial Bus technology for connecting peripherals packed into small, brightly colored chassis. They also lack "legacy hardware," such as ISA slots, serial ports and parallel ports, and are instead bundled with a USB keyboard and Mouse.

"I wouldn't call these the ultimate easy-to-use PCs," said Whalley, but he

indicated that they're a step in the direction in which Easy PC is headed. "This time next year, back to school and holiday 2000, we'll see more significant improvements in ease of use," he said.

Intel is expected to continue to push the development of Easy PCs by announcing the availability of the Easier to Use Hardware Implementation Guide 2000 version 1.0 at its Developers Forum at the end of the month. The guide, for PC makers, details the removing of legacy hardware and implementing Instantly Available PC Technology, which will allow PCs to go into a sleep mode, instead of being shut down completely.

A new set of PC design guidelines, called PC 2001, will also include guidelines for building easy-to-use PCs, Whalley said. PC 2001, expected to be finalized in the first half of next year, will help original equipment manufacturers specify form factors, thermal designs and other issues, such as the number of USB ports to build into each PC. It, too, will be announced at the Developers Forum.

Many improvements will come through operating system software. Microsoft Corp. is in early beta testing stages of the next version of its Consumer Windows operating system. Code-named Millennium, the OS is expected to add a host of new ease-of-use features.

Intel is also developing methods to measure ease of use in PCs. The tests would help OEMs improve their designs by measuring things such as the amount of time it takes to set up a PC, how long it takes to register with an online service and the ease of attaching peripheral devices. Also measured would be common operations such as creating or moving files from folder to folder.

Those tests include the Intel Initial Experience Predictor Tool, for measuring the ease with which a PC can be set up, which will be discussed at the developers forum.

More information about the Easy PC Initiative is available at Intel's Developer Web site.

### Sun Microsystems Designs Java Chip

Hoping to capitalize on the popularity of its free Java programming language, Sun Microsystems is creating a computer chip designed to run software written with that code.

The microprocessor - named MAJC and pronounced "magic" - is intended to run both computers and consumer electronic devices, the company said Monday.

The move would bring Sun into competition with Intel and its market-dominating computer chips, especially the Pentium line. In recent years, numerous attempts to compete with Intel on price and design have failed.

Sun, however, is familiar with such challenges, having chipped away at Microsoft's dominance in software by creating Java and giving programmers open access to the code, which can be used to write applications for a variety of systems.

The new chips would improve a machine's ability to run Java-based programs for applications such as voice recognition, networking, three-dimensional graphics and other complex computing, said Marc Tremblay, chief architect on the project.

But the chips will also work with several other programming languages, he said.

Sun plans to present an overview of the MAJC architecture at a technical conference in mid-August and unveil the chip in October.

"This addresses where the industry is headed," said Jay Stevens, a senior vice president of Buckingham Research Group. "The movement of data, video and voice, very quickly, efficiently and cheaply, is the leading edge."

Sun would not disclose what company will be fabricating the new chips, nor what companies they are working with to build computers and devices with the chips.

#### Palm IIIe 'Special Edition' To Debut

3Com Corp.'s Palm Computing Inc. division announced a Special Edition version of the Palm IIIe handheld organizer on Tuesday.

What makes the Special Edition special? Cosmetics. The device is identical to a Palm IIIe except that its housing and flip lid are clear rather than the traditional gray.

The \$229 Palm IIIe Special Edition will not be available through Palm's Hardware Discount Program, unlike the regular Palm IIIe, which is expected to be soon, according to sources close to the Santa Clara, Calif., company.

The Palm IIIe organizer, introduced last month, is the screen-enhanced version of the Palm III. It includes 2MB of memory that stores 6,000 addresses, five years of appointments, 1,500 "to do" items, 1,500 memos and 200 e-mail messages.

Palm Computing is at [www.palm.com](http://www.palm.com).

#### Morton Downey Jr., '80s TV Host, Turns To Web

Morton Downey Jr., the chain-smoking television talk show host whose loud and confrontational style made him a hit in the 1980s, is hoping to recapture his popularity on the Internet.

Downey, who launched a Web site earlier this month offering business and political commentary, joins a growing number of television personalities such as newsmen Hugh Downs and Lou Dobbs, who left TV for the Internet.

By applying the same brashness that made him famous until his show was canceled in 1990, Downey intends to make his Web site (<http://www.mortondowneyjr.net>) a home base for fans.

Downey, 66, said in a recent interview that the Internet gives him a new

way tap his reputation, and perhaps make a little money along the way. ``Most of the old Downey shows are evergreens," he said. ``A lot of the content comes from the old shows."

Beyond selling decade-old programs and T-shirts, the Web site offers visitors Downey's opinions on everything from Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to the importance of saving money.

Downey has a TV series, called ``Discovering Wall Street," currently being carried by about 100 stations throughout the country that will also be part of the site.

Already, his armchair analysis on companies such as Pfizer Inc. and Procter & Gamble Co. has appeared online, employing few words and many quips to describe their businesses.

Downey has praised the merits of real estate investment trusts, or REITS, saying: ``These babies are low volatility investments in tangible assets."

Downey said the new site is not aimed at promoting specific businesses or stocks, but he hopes to generate revenues through advertising and merchandising. He did not elaborate.

Speaking by telephone from his home in Los Angeles, Downey said he has been keeping busy since his notorious TV show went off the air in 1990.

Downey, who has a doctorate in political science, has been working as a corporate lobbyist and appearing as a political commentator on TV.

Downey, whose on-camera smoking was a regular part of his in-your-face style, said he quit the habit after undergoing lung cancer surgery in 1996. Downey has since become a public advocate in anti-smoking campaigns.

A spokesman for the Web site said an anti-smoking message will be included in the its contents.

Downey admitted his new Web site is a transformation of sorts, but insisted he's still the same person. ``My persona has changed, but the personality is always the same," he said.

#### Study Finds Home PC Users Keen On Home Networking

More than 17 million U.S. households are interested in networking their personal computers, printers and other devices so allow household members can share information and Internet access, a study released Monday by researchers Yankee Group said.

About 37 percent of households with personal computers (PC), and 50 percent of households with more than one PC, liked the idea of linking information products -- though the concept is new and not many products are widely available to do so.

``While the market is still rather new and not well understood by consumers, these findings suggest there is pent-up demand for consumers to share applications such as high-speed Internet access, video and audio content, or a common home printer," said Boyd Peterson, vice president at technology market consulting firm Yankee Group.

Of 2,000 PC households in the United States that responded to the Yankee Group survey, 68 percent have more than one family member who uses the Internet, and report instances where more than one family member wants to get online at the same time.

Among other things, home networking would allow a household to share Internet access among several PCs, thereby allowing several family members to surf the Web simultaneously through a single connection.

"The key challenge for companies offering Home Networking solutions is to bring the right mix of product functionality to the right group of users," says Karuna Uppal, Yankee Group Home Networking senior analyst.

Other desired applications include: printer sharing, sharing of video and audio content, and multi-user gaming.

#### File Sharing A New Portal Application?

What if you want to post pictures on the Web of your new baby, but don't have a home page? Or you have some files that you want to make available to a select group of people, but don't want to clog up your e-mail server shipping them around?

JustOn Inc. Wednesday announced plans to help consumers solve those problems by letting them upload files to its site and share them with a select group of people.

The Santa Clara, Calif.-based startup isn't the only one getting into the business. Yahoo! Inc. is beta testing a Briefcase application that would allow consumers to store digital images and other files online, and share them with friends.

JustOn is hoping that other portal sites will follow on that trend, and license its application.

"Most of the portals will also have that functionality. Some will build it themselves. But everybody else will most likely outsource," said Simon Khalaf, president of JustOn.

Khalaf said his company plans to add additional features such as virus checking and encryption.

"It's not just a briefcase where you can put baby pictures. We're making it a product small businesses can use," he said.

JustOn is focusing mainly on file sharing. But other companies have expressed interest in the picture side of things. Eastman Kodak Co.'s PhotoNet service lets consumers receive digital copies of their prints online, and e-mail them to friends. The company has also signed a deal with America Online Inc. to present the pictures within AOL's service.

#### Competition Fierce In Online Pet Industry



White Labradors lounge in the corridors, as executives compare notes on cat psychiatrists and smile down on expensively framed photos of pets that decorate their desks.

It looks like the ultimate in touchy-feely work places, where furry creatures take priority over finances, deadlines and other drudgeries of the human work world.

But looks can be misleading and in truth it's a dog-eat-dog world even here -- many would say especially here -- in the online pet store industry.

Not even the most opportunistic entrepreneurs have dared to attempt selling live pets over the Internet. But in the past several months at least half a dozen companies have set up shop offering every pet product imaginable, from organic cat litter, to iguana soap, and top-of-the line brass parrot cages.

At least four of these online pet stores have received more than \$10 million in venture capital, dwarfing the amounts Internet pioneers like Yahoo had to get by with in their early days, and making the online pet business one of the most heavily funded and fiercely competitive sectors of e-commerce.

"It came completely out of nowhere," says Andrea Reisman, co-founder and chief executive of San Francisco-based Petopia.com, which had been regarded as an underdog in the race until it secured some \$66 million in financing last month.

"One day we went to investors to talk about pets and in the space of two weeks, half a dozen serious competitors emerged," recalls Reisman, a proud dog owner who plans to equip the company's new offices with dog doors in all the board rooms.

Today Petopia is in competition with Petstore.com, a startup-based in Emeryville, Calif.; along with Petsmart.com, the Pasadena, Calif. online store launched last month by the Petsmart Inc. superchain; and Pets.com, another San Francisco-based startup that has the not so small advantage of being backed by online powerhouse Amazon.com .

If it is hard to keep track of the names now, it may become even more so. Other general pet sites like PetPlanet.com Inc also plan to open pet stores shortly.

There are different versions on how the online pet store business came seemingly out of nowhere to become one of the most hotly-contested spaces on the Internet. Some entrepreneurs claim a love of animals and a desire to work in a good, ethical business. Others describe a more calculated process in which they eliminated all the categories, like books, that already had clear leaders, and zeroed in on what was still unclaimed.

Then in late March, Amazon.com, embarking on a strategy to transform itself from a book, CD and video retailer into a virtual mall, made pets one of its first breakout categories. Initially, a lot of people were surprised by its investment in Pets.com, but when they took a closer look they understood the wisdom of the move.

It turns out that pet products -- everything from food to kitty litter, flea collars, fish tank decorations and aquarium heaters -- represent a \$23 billion-a-year market in the U.S., with many of the items selling at a higher margin than books or CDs. And with 76 percent of pet owners claiming

they feel guilty when they leave their pets home alone, 38 percent saying they call on the phone to check in, there is also an emotional aspect to the market that is harder to quantify.

''Pet products seem like a pretty homespun industry," says Pets.com Chief Executive Julie Wainwright. ''When people saw the size of this market, they were blown away."

Around the same time investors started running the numbers on the pet market, the whole Internet economy was entering a new phase. Strong sales in the 1998 Christmas season had served as a validation that e-commerce was not a passing fad, and entrepreneurs began looking anew at categories, like groceries and furniture, they had initially dismissed because of high shipping costs.

''They started to understand that it could be feasible to ship heavy items, if you ship out of multiple locations," explains Petstore.com Chief Executive Josh Newman, who says his personal tie to the industry is his pet fish.

Trying to make it economical to ship a 40 pound bag of dog food cross country is one of the challenges that will weigh more heavily on the online pet stores than it has on retailers of mostly lightweight books and CDs.

Pets.com, for example, says it is currently losing money on some of its larger shipments to the east coast from its San Francisco warehouse, and plans to open at least two more distribution centers in other parts of the country to be closer to more of its customers. While most of the companies have secured alliances with offline retailers, Petsmart.com says its affiliation with the largest offline pet superstore in the country gives it far superior capability on order fulfillment.

Another somewhat unique challenge in the pet space is striking a balance between selling aggressively and avoiding the blatantly hard sell. The thought is that most pet lovers are a bit pet-obsessed and will go to a pet site not to make a quick purchase, but to take in cute animal photos and get a dose of pet talk. After they spend some time on the site, they may be nudged into buying something, and eventually use the site to order regular refills of food and other staples.

All of these stores, therefore, pad the retail parts of their sties with extensive content ranging from serious medical advice to random trivia, like lists of famous cat lovers (and haters) throughout history.

Want advice on a pet custody battle? Pets.com employs a pet attorney. Petopia features a long article on preventive dentistry for cats, and Petstore.com has an exclusive relationship with 2,000 veterinarians it hopes will make it the authoritative source for medical advice.

Of course, some believe that the battle will not be won on content or creative marketing, but on the amount of money each business gets, and on the quality of their backers.

Experts say that where an amount less than \$10 million was once sufficient to launch an online business, companies aiming to be serious contenders now need five times that amount. Nowhere is this more evident than in the pet space, which is maturing at a pace more akin to dog years than human ones.

''The model here is that you need \$10 million to get going and you probably need another \$30 to \$50 million in soft dollars, like advertising money,"

says Bob Barret, a founding partner of Battery Ventures, which helped fund Petstore.com.

The first big challenge to the industry will come later this month, when Amazon.com will add a link on its site to the Pets.com site.

Pets.com's Wainwright says this so-called "Amazon halo effect" is hard to overestimate, and may help to quickly narrow the field of players.

"Everyone's saying this market is big enough for three or four players," she says, basking in the confidence that comes from an alliance with the most feared competitor in e-commerce. "But it's not. There's only room for one or two."

### Sony Sees Big Market For Robot Dogs

Sony Corp said Wednesday it saw a hungry market for "entertainment robots" after its robot pet dog -- which cost a whopping \$2,500 dollars each -- sold out rapidly in both Japan and the United States.

Sony's home entertainment robot, AIBO, one of a new breed of electronic pets, can be taken for walks, chases balls and wags its tail. Its limited edition of 3,000 units sold out in 20 minutes in Japan, while 2,000 went in four days in the United States.

"The demand for this kind of robotic pet has been much greater than expected," Toshi Doi, president of Sony Digital Creatures Laboratory told Reuters in an interview in Stockholm. "I think this can become a big business and a big market."

"What we're trying to do is raise a brand new industry and AIBO is the first step in this."

AIBO, with a mounted camera, has artificial intelligence capabilities that include a learning function which allow it to respond to external stimuli and make its own judgements.

Doi, attending the third annual Robot World Cup Soccer tournament in Stockholm, said he expected every household to have two to three entertainment robots within 10 years time.

The tournament included competitions for Sony's robot dogs alongside small robots, medium-size robots and simulated robot soccer. France beat Australia in the Sony robot soccer finals Wednesday.

Doi said the robot tournament was aimed at attracting more attention to artificial intelligence and boost research and development in the field.

Sony planned to produce more AIBO robots next year and would steadily move to boost focus on entertainment robots, such as robotic dogs and other walking game machines, Doi said. But he expects the price tag to drop as more are produced.

"In the future the total industry of automated robots will exceed the total amount of the personal computer industry," he said.

Doi, also chairman and CEO of Sony Computer Science Laboratories, said the

automated robot market would in the future be split into entertainment robots, like the AIBO dog, and innovative working robots.

''These non-entertainment robots could be cleaning robots, robots to help aged people and robots that find mines," Doi said.

But he did not expect Sony to start work on these models for another three years, after it has gathered enough technology to produce robots that were reliable for serious jobs. ''For now I'm working on building up the entertainment robot industry."

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